# The Red Mole

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# VIETNAM SOLIDARITY

## The Mac Stiofain Arrest: A New British Offensive

The arrest of Sean Mac Stiofain, like the previous arrest of Maire Drum, (the Provisional leader from Belfast), reveals the brittle facade of "democracy" in the 26 County state. Mac Stiofain has been charged with membership of an illegal organisation, but the legislation under which he will be tried *has not yet been passed by the Dail.* This legislation will shift the onus of proof from the prosecution to the defence, in trials (before special tribunals) of people charged under this section of the Offences Against The State Act. In other words Mac Stiofain will have to prove that he is *not* a member of the IRA to secure acquittal. At one stroke two fundamental principles of bourgeois law are overthrown:no retrospective legislation; and innocence until proved guilty, with the onus of such proof on the prosecution.

The probability that Mac Stiofain will receive a two year sentence should not be seen as the main problem which is revealed by his arrest. Despite his enormous military ability, his arrest alone will not break the campaign in the North. The real problem is the continued weakness of the struggle in the South. The purpose of Whitelaw's ramblings on the "Irish Dimension" in his Green Paper, is now *revealed. Unable to defeat the struggle in the Six Counties, British Imperialism is now going over to an all-Ireland offensive. And in return for the meaningless promises of the Green* Paper, Fianna Fail is acting as its main agent. Never before has the crucial importance of an all-Ireland struggle by Irish republicans and socialists been shown so starkly.

### CONTRADICTION

But the slowness with which Fianna Fail has responded to the requirements of British Imperialism reveals an important contradiction. They are the agency through which British imperialism must mediate its offensive; but they are a weak agency. While they have ridden out the storms of the last four years, and have even strengthened their position, they have, for historical reasons, been reluctant up to now to come out so openly on the side of British imperialism.

A quick and fierce response to the Mac Stiofain arrest could have salutary effects. This is not just a question of the 26 Counties, but of action internationally, and especially in Britain. A major task of the solidarity movement must be to *harry the Free State Government,* through pickets, demonstrations, and other actions against Irish Tourist Offices, Aer Lingus offices, and other arms of the 26 Counties. This is not just the responsibility of Irish exiles; since British imperialism is behind them, a blow at Jack Lynch is a blow at Whitelaw. That blow must be struck now, with the maximum weight and speed that can be mustered.

Every class conscious worker in this country is 100% on the side of the Indo-Chinese people in their struggle to throw American imperialism out of their countries. The negotiations which seem to be reaching a crucial stage in Paris make it necessary for us to confront three basic questions in order to be able to carry on effective solidarity work. Why have the Vietnamese had to negotiate with the Americans? What problems will the National Liberation Front face if agreement is reached in Paris? And what stand should those in Britain who support the struggle for self-determination in Indo-China take?

### MOSCOW AND PEKING

The plain fact is that the single most important reason why the Vietnamese have been forced to negotiate with US imperialism is the treachery of the two main workers' states, Russia and China. The facts which demonstrate this bitter truth have been published many times in the *Red Mole.* And every week brings fresh evidence to light. On November 19, the *New York Times* published the figures of Soviet military aid to other countries. There is one people which above all others needs every gun, bomb and rocket it can lay its hands on and that is the Vietnamese. And yet the Soviet leadership supplies more military aid to Egypt, more to Iraq and more to India–three reactionary bourgeois states which are daily suppressing working class militants in their own countries–than it sends to Vietnam. Last year alone, military aid to Sadat's Egypt was 350,000,000 dollars, while the Vietnamese received a mere 100,000,000 dollars. As for the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou-en Lai, he welcomed Nixon's re-election "because he played a role in improving relations between the United States and China".

*Demonstration in June was promising start in rebuilding solidarity movement* (Photo: Mike Cohen)

### AFTER AN AGREEMENT

The problems which would confront the National Liberation Front after the signing of a Treaty have been spelt out most clearly by the Vietnamese themselves. The September 1972 issue of *Vietnam Courier* contains an editorial which should be studied by every socialist. It states:"Mr. Nixon wants to keep in hand that puppet army and police which will enable him to impose his will on the Vietnamese people. If he can just get a few months' respite, in order to get himself re-elected and prop up that apparatus so badly shaken by the offensive of the patriotic forces, Mr Nixon will be in a favourable position to invoke all kinds of pretexts and do what his predecessors had done, that is, to send in US military power each time that apparatus is threatened.

"Nixon's proposals will not therefore lead to peace, but to an indefinite prolongation of the conflict. US armed aggression against Viet Nam has definite political aims: to impose US neo-colonialist domination on the country. So long as there is no political settlement, so long as Washington does not give up its will to force on the Vietnamese people a government at the Americans' beck and call, there will be no genuine peace."

### WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT?

The criminal failure of the Russian and Chinese leaders to give all out support to the Indo-chinese revolution has *forced* the Vietnamese to make the *concession* of negotiating with the Americans. But under no conditions should we, in Britain, support the right of imperialism to wring these concessions from the Vietnamese. We should learn from history. When the infant Soviet Republic was forced to compromise with German imperialism in 1918 and sign the Brest Litovsk Treaty because of its isolation, revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg were in the forefront of those attacking the treaty. Why? Because they rejected the right of their own bourgeoisie to extract concessions from the Russian workers. It was the German Social-Democrats, many of whom mouthed support for the Russian workers' state just as the Russians and Chinese now mouth support for the Vietnamese, who voted for Brest Litovsk. The Bolsheviks were scathing in their reply:

**"You swine. We are objectively compelled to negotiate in order not to be annihilated, but as for you–you are politically free to vote for or against, and your vote implies whether or not you place confidence in your own bourgeoisie."**

Our job is not to whip up support for the negotiations, but to attack the US's right to negotiate over the future of Indo-China. Secondly we must redouble our efforts for the *complete victory* of the Indo-Chinese people. Specifically we must mobilise for the INDO-CHINA SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE on December 2nd/3rd in London, and turn that conference into a spring-board for developing the solidarity work.

**SOLIDARITY TILL FINAL VICTORY!**
**ALL POWER TO THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT!**
**FOR THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL IMPERIALIST TROOPS FROM S.E. ASIA!**
**FOR A UNITED AND SOCIALIST VIETNAM!**

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## PAY FREEZE FRONT LINE

By MIKE FITZGERALD

After years of passive acceptance of low pay and bad conditions hospital ancillary workers are getting up and fighting. Strikes, go-slows, overtime bans, and rank and file organisations, familiar forms of struggle in most other sectors of industry, have been virtually unknown in the hospitals until this year. But this new-found militancy can only be successful if the reasons for the previous weakness of hospital workers and the precise forms of government and management attacks are understood.

### NECESSARY EVILS

Why are most hospital workers and especially ancillary staff so badly paid? For the ruling class the National Health Service (set up in 1948) was a necessary evil: necessary because workers, like machines, have to be maintained and repaired when they go wrong and are not easily replaceable in conditions of full employment; evil because it cannot be run at a profit. So the N.H.S. has provided a minimal service as cheaply as possible and financed mainly by the working class through income tax, National Insurance contributions, and charges. Since the N.H.S. is a labour-intensive "industry", employing 800,000 workers, low pay for the majority of them is an essential part of running it on the cheap.

However this could not be done without the acquiescence of the workers themselves. This is achieved in a number of ways. The general hangeover of the ideological traditions of hospitals from the time when they were charitable

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# A.I.L. HOLDS SUCCESSFUL DEMO

*A section of the demonstration on its way from Hyde Park to the Embankment*

By ROSEMARY SULLIVAN

Through one of the worst downpours of rain seen in London this year, over two thousand supporters marched across London on the Anti-Internment League's November 12th demonstration.

It wasn't the biggest demonstration which the AIL has pulled off, *but it was the most important*, because it represented a break from the "politics of the last atrocity", i.e. that demonstrations take place in London only if and when British imperialism commits an atrocity of such dimension as to itself act as the mobiliser for the demonstration.

## IMPRESSIVE

The impressive march started from Speakers Corner in Hyde Park and wound its way, in foul weather, through London to the bottom of Fleet Street, where a rally was addressed by Bernadette Devlin, Michael Farrell, Eamonn McCann, Bob Purdie and Gery Lawless.

AIL branches from all over England, Scotland and Wales joined with contingents from the British revolutionary left, Provisional Sinn Fein, Clann na hEireann and Peoples Democracy.

The largest and most impressive British group on the march was the 600 strong contingent from the International Marxist Group. The International Socialists, who claim a membership of over a thousand in the London area alone, turned out about 270 in their contingent.

At the rally, Eamonn McCann said, "It is now popular in most circles to condemn "terrorism", but the condemnation of terrorism could be, and was, used as an excuse for not getting involved in the struggle. In British Left-wing circles, this condemnation was used as a vehicle to extricate the people involved from any possibility of commitment to the Irish struggle."

## SECTARIAN MURDERS

Loyalist extreme forces were responsible for more than 100 brutal sectarian murders during the past year, Michael Farrell of the People's Democracy claimed.

"The British Army is fighting in Ireland today its most serious military battle since Korea, but they are not winning that battle." He said that the Army was fighting a war of attrition against "the Irish people as a whole, not just the IRA" and described conditions in Anderstown as a "military occupation without parallel since the Nazi occupation of Poland".

Despite over 20,000 British troops and 6,000 UDR members, the British Government "are now using the forces of Orange fascism, the UDA, the UVF and their like, to smash the anti-Unionist resistance".

## ARMY'S LOW MORALE

"If printed.vestiage could win the war in Ireland", said Gery Lawless, "Britain would have won it long ago. Day after day, all the British papers,and some Irish papers, report that the war is won, Whitelaw is winning, the IRA is on the run, etc., etc. Only one short year ago they were saying the same thing for Faulkner.

"Meanwhile, back in the real world, a truer grasp of reality is shown in the initiation of the Christmas royal tour of hospitals, to boost the morale of the wounded and maimed from the British Army in Ireland.

"Morale in the British Army in the North is at an all-time low and this is being reflected in the tremendous drop in the current recruiting and re-enlistment figures.

"This demo is not an end in itself, but must be seen as part of a campaign to construct in Britain a movement in solidarity with the *actual struggle* in Ireland: a movement capable of explaining to the British labour and student movements the realities of the situation, and organising and directing the opposition in such a manner as to further contribute to the political isolation of the British army from the British working class and the destruction of its morale. Only such a calculated and deliberate strategy can give meaningful aid to the Irish insurgents".

## A WEAKNESS

The demonstration showed that the solidarity movement is again growing and the hysteria in the press has not caused complete confusion within its ranks. Nevertheless, a question mark still hangs over the position of the International Socialism group. One week before the demonstration, the IS branch in Liverpool left the AIL. In York, instead of trying to get maximum support for a meeting to mobilise for the demo, the IS organised its own internal branch meeting at the same time in the same building. In Edinburgh the IS did nothing to organise for the demonstration, although they did have time during thag week to issue a lying attack on *The Red Mole's* coverage of Irish affairs.

Whether these actions were localised breaches of discipline or represent a turn away from the solidarity movement by the IS leadership is not yet clear.

## NEXT STEP

The next step planned for the AIL will be the mass distribution throughout Britain of a leaflet written by Bob Purdie, organiser of the AIL, explaining the present role of British troops in the West Belfast area. Supporting organisations of the AIL can obtain these leaflets at £1 per thousand.

The first priority in the New Year will be to organise around the commemoration of Bloody Sunday on 28th January. The AIL sets itself two main tasks here. Firstly, to organise, probably in London, a mass rally; secondly, to take up the call, made by Bernadette Devlin, for a world-wide week-end of events focused on Ireland, and to use the good offices and resources of the AIL for this purpose. An ad hoc group inside the AIL, led by Pat Arrowsmith, is also organising a contingent from the British labour movement to travel to Derry for the unveiling of the memorial to the victims of Bloody Sunday.

# SCANDINAVIAN RALLY

Over the weekend of 17th to 19th November, a rally and cadre school of the Scandinavian sections and sympathising groups of the Fourth International was held in Copenhagen. The rally marked the fortieth anniversary of Trotsky's last public speech, delivered in Copenhagen in November 1932. The speech, 'In Defence of the Russian Revolution' was both an important statement of the historic significance of the October revolution, and laid the scientific basis for analysing the nature of the Soviet Union after the ascendancy of Stalin.

Among those taking part in the cadre school were two of Trotsky's aides, who were present at the time of the original address, Georg Jungclas and Pierre Frank – both of whom are still active as leaders of the Fourth International. The cadre school was attended by three hundred and fifty militants of the Fourth International's Sections in Denmark and Sweden and sympathising groups in Norway and Finland. Speakers at the school included Ernest Mandel, Fred Halstead of the American Socialist Workers' Party, Henri Weber of the French Ligue Communiste, and Robin Blackburn of the International Marxist Group.

# School Students Alliance

The failure of the leadership of the National Union of School Students to relate education to politics has prompted several members of the N.U.S.S. to form a movement within the Union called the School Students Alliance (S.S.A.). It has so far won support from schools members or sympathisers of the I.M.G., the I.S., the Socialist Charter, Rebel, the R.S.L. and the Communist Party of Britain (M.-L.).

The S.S.A. still believes that the N.U.S.S. is the right union for school students, but thinks that it will fail unless it goes beyond sectional issues and links itself with the class struggle. The S.S.A. supports workers' struggles, not only in this country but throughout the world, and is aiming to commit the Union at its next conference (October 1973) to concrete solidarity action with such struggles. If there is sufficient support, the S.S.A. will work for an emergency National Conference and hopefully win a majority for its policies. A letter from the S.S.A. says the following: "We call on all *Red Mole* readers at school to contact us if you are interested in putting forward suggestions and in helping us prepare a programme to be put forward at the next National Conference:

School Students' Alliance,
58, Burbage Road,
London, S.E.24."

# NUS Conference: lull before the storm

By J.R.CLYNES

Nothing of the fanfare that has greeted recent NUS conferences surrounds the one which opens in Margate this weekend. But this is no more than a lull before the storm. A big wave of educational 'rationalisation' is imminent. The effects of the 'rationalising' cut-backs have already been felt with the accomodation crisis and the appallingly low level of grants. As the malaise spreads to new areas over the coming months the scope and intensity of student struggles will also rise. The question is: will there be adequate leadership from the NUS?

## UNION AUTONOMY

We cannot expect much from the NUS Executive. On all issues they continue to behave as though it was business as usual. Official policy as regards the right to full autonomy for students' unions is, incredible though it may seem, that this is merely a long-term aim. The Margate Conference at least gives us a chance to ram home one vital truth: that the students' unions must demand here and now, before the fight gets underway on other issues, full autonomy from the state and college bureaucracies.

## REPRESENTATION

On the question of strategy, this conference will be debating the dead end which official NUS policy has reached. The goal of student struggles, as presented by the NUS leadership, is to gain representation on governing and policy making bodies. This utopian notion that the problems of higher education can be solved within each institution so long as rational debate is allowed to flourish has been largely discredited by the experience of the mass of students themselves. Out of the frustration is coming a confrontation with the real problem: the fight against capitalist 'reforms' and rationalisation. This fight can be waged only through a struggle against the integrationist trap of representation, for it forces students to take responsibility for a problem which is produced solely by the capitalist system. The alternative is to fight for a veto right on the basis of mass struggle

## THE CONTEXT

After the events of the last year, it is impossible for students activists to ignore the relationship between developments in higher education and the wider context of the class struggle. The problems of the working class are increasingly becoming the problems of students. But at the conference there are a number of resolutions which mark a disastrous capitulation to the Labour and trade union bureaucracies. It is absolutely not the case that the main effort of mass struggle should be around the election of a Labour government. The central question is how to carry the struggle of the mass of workers forward against all those forces which threaten it,whether they be the police,the courts, or the present government. The main arena for the advance of the working class struggle at this present moment is neither inside Parliament nor around elections, as the freeing of the five dockers' leaders showed. And the main path forward towards a socialist alternative lies through strengthening the fighting ability of the mass of workers at this present moment and not through placing reliance on some future government to resolve the problems of the working class. Thus, what must be hammered home at the NUS conference must not be academic lectures on the great educative value of having a Labour government in the future in order that it might expose itself (leave alone talk about getting a Labour government which will introduce a socialist programme!). It is that in the immediate period the NUS must work to mobilise the full strength of students behind workers in struggle against the pay freeze and all the other instruments of capitalist policy at the present time.

To prepare students for the storms ahead will require the greatest possible unity within the revolutionary left. This is why the meeting to be held the afternoon that the conference opens, to discuss the work of the left, is of extreme importance.

# LAW AND ORDER

Lt. Col. Derek Wilford, para leader on Bloody Sunday in Derry, gets an OBE for meritorious behaviour. Noel Jenkinson, alleged to have taken part in the reprisal bombing of the Paras' headquarters in Aldershot, gets 30 years in prison. Such is the law and order which the British Government is trying to impose on the North of Ireland.

# CAV - The "Right to Belong"

## Pete Cresswell and Brian Slocock report on the occupation and interview Franny Martin, T&G Convenor at CAV.

For the last seven weeks workers at the Lucas-combine CAV factory, in Fazakerley, Liverpool, have been occupying their site in a fight against management plans to "rationalise" the factory out of existence. As promised, we are continuing our coverage of the CAV workers' struggle through an interview with Franny Martin, Transport & General Workers' Union convenor at CAV.

Franny offers up to date information on the conduct of the struggle and the support it has received so far. He also makes a very important point which does much to clarify the nature of struggles like this one.

### LINKS

A factory is not only a place which workers go to in order to sell their labour power and be exploited by the capitalist system; it is also the centre of a very important set of links *built up among the workers themselves* in the fight *against* this very exploitation and the oppressive conditions under which it takes place. Thus a struggle like that at CAV is not only about the "right to work" – a "right" the capitalist class has long ago recognised, provided it is on *their* terms. Such struggles are also about the workers' need to preserve those links that allow them to combat capitalist exploitation and oppression – what Franny at one point calls the "right to belong".

It is only when we understand this that we can understand the significance of occupations: they are the highest expression of the links formed by workers in their struggle, *on a local level.*

That is, within the factory the social relationships of the workers involved in an occupation are used to smash the power of management (the managers are expelled and their offices taken over, foremen either leave or lose their special authority, etc.) and these relationships then become the basis for a new authority, based directly upon the needs of the workers themselves. Thus a factory occupation is a sort of tiny rehearsal of the socialist revolution itself: not in the sense that it can lead to "socialism in one factory", but in the sense that just as workers within one factory are forced, in order to meet their basic class needs, to smash the authority of capitalist management and establish their own institutions in its place (mass meetings, occupation committees, administrative committees etc.) so will the whole working class eventually be forced by the logic of their fight to smash the authority of the capitalist state and set up new institutions based upon the social relations, and serving the needs, of the whole working class. This, a sort of occupation of the whole capitalist system by the entire working class, will be the socialist revolution: and when it happens it will be just as real and just as necessary for the mass of workers as is the CAV occupation to that single group of workers.

**There is a widespread capitalist "rationalisation" of British industry at the present time. What part do you think this has had in your problems here at CAV?**

Over the last two and a half years Lucas have reorganised the whole combine into three production areas (electrical, aerospace, and fuel injection equipment). Fuel injection equipment, of which we are a part, is now mainly situated in factories in the South-East. These are all combine factories located, in our opinion, with an eye on the Common Market. They've also got a Spanish factory, *Condiesel.*

So Lucas are extending their control and at the same time, rationalizing their operations. This has enabled them to cut down their labour force from 76,000 to 62,000 according to the latest figures we've seen. So, through their rationalisation programme, they've reduced the labour force by 14,000 people.

I think the whole question of rationalisation by multinational combines is geared purely to the aim of reaching higher profits. The problems affecting workers are only given secondary importance – these combines take care of their own particular interests first. We think that our task is to break down the communication barrier and get across with the message that only the working class will support the working class: we can't expect anything from those who live on our backs.

**How do you plan to carry on the struggle from this point?**

Our main intention, obviously, is to get support from our fellow workers in the group, and to black Lucas products. We've had an important success here on this site already by stopping the operation of Lucas Industrial equipment. They employed 350 people on this site, but we've forced them to close down now, so Lucas have lost all their electrical production from here. We have also imprisoned all of Lucas' transport on this site – and that controls the destiny of Victor Works, part of the aerospace division. So very soon we will see the aerospace operations in Liverpool being forced to shut down. We've been given assurances that the work normally carried out by the transport from this site, from Birmingham to Standard's and to Ford's, will cease. We did have an immediate blacking in Birmingham, but this was relaxed because of the union's attitude in that particular area. But the communications have now been put right, and we should now see a very successful escalation of this dispute. Joseph Lucas will definitely have to come to this factory and talk about reopening it very soon.

Actually, Lucas obtained this site at the cost of only about £800,000 in 1961. The machinery has all been paid for by government loans of 60%. This factory will remain here, and we will remain with this factory: we will never be moved by anybody until they start production again in this particular factory. I hold no particular loyalty – I don't believe any of my fellow-workers do – to Joseph Lucas. But we do owe a loyalty to the movement we all belong to. We're concerned, not out of ambition but out of pure necessity, to win the right to work, whether here or anywhere else. But this is the factory where we were employed, where we negotiated, where we gained confidence in one another, and where we were able to win improved conditions and higher wages for this site. We're prepared to continue this occupation for ever if necessary. One thing's sure: if Joseph Lucas doesn't reopen production, this factory will never be used for anything else.

**What have you been able to do about gaining support from other groups of workers on Merseyside, nationally and internationally?**

We've been to the London factories and they have told us they will not undertake any work normally done on this site. So the management's plans to increase their production down there by 33 per cent with the work normally done in Fazakerley are going to run into trouble. We know that the pressure of our unions' *membership* as well as some small offerings from the officials, will make this a success.

Recently we had a discussion with Tariq Ali when he visited the site, and he offered assistance in getting our message across to the combine factories in France and Spain. We appreciate this offer of help and will take it up. We don't know exactly what it will be possible to do, but appreciate that this is a genuine effort to put some pressure on the management.

We've had many meetings recently with the Trades Council and we're attending a meeting tonight. We hope that this meeting will agree on a one-day demonstration, not only in support of the people at CAV, but also on the questions of unemployment and working conditions in Merseyside. We hope this demonstration will take place in the near future. The Trades Council are definitely concerned about the amount of threatened closures and high unemployment on Merseyside.

We would like to congratulate the workers in Vauxhalls, Fords, Fisher-Bendix, the docks, and many of the main industries around, for their wonderful support. We've got financial support and we appreciate it. But that alone will not win our struggle.

**–Do you think that problems like the ones you are facing will affect other groups of workers on Merseyside in the future?**

I think Merseyside is going to be one of the areas most hit by the Common Market entry, along with the North-East and possibly Scotland, because workers on Merseyside are not willing to accept a cutting back of the progress they've made over the past number of years. So Merseyside is going to be one particular spot, due to its geographic location, that is not going to be such a profitable place of property as it was a few years ago when people didn't assert their needs and were simply exploited. Now Merseyside has a voice, but it will need the support of the whole labour movement to keep it going and encourage it. But there's no danger that Merseyside will lose its principles in the struggle.

*Franny Martin*

**– What sort of links do you think are necessary between workers in Britrain and those in Europe?**

I personally can see the need for links. I'm involved with the Transport & General Workers' Union, personally, and we had a meeting recently where the T&G agreed that we send a delegation of lay members to the continent to discuss those problems that we are most concerned about. We are hoping that when we go to these factories in France, Germany, Belgium and possibly Spain, a closer liaison will be gained and better links will be built.

We know that the official union line is for organisation on a vast scale, in the same way that the government and the CBI are organising now, but we hope that the common links, worker-to-worker rather than official-to-official, will be the basis for the unity of the struggle of the working class.

**– There are quite a few women employed in the factory here, have they been fully involved in the workings of the occupation?**

Women have played a very important role; they've really come to the front. We've had women out on many delegations to factories which mainly employ women, and they've got involved in the canteen and the sit-in social committee. Most women are now on a par, if not further advanced, than most of the men.

**–You have had some support from students and a support committee has been set up on the university, what sort of help have they given you so far and what would you most want from them in the future?**

We've had the lads from the university down helping us on social security questions, communications and publicity, and we've also had financial support. We've seen the strength of the intelligence that's involved in these particular movements and we really appreciate their involvement. We know that the 1000 people involved in this struggle here are not going to win on the question of the right to belong, as well as the right to work, with just our own limited resources. We are very conscious of the value of these developments among the students in coming to our support here. They have never denied us anything we asked for and we can only say thanks very much.

In the future we will welcome any kind of support, but we particularly value the discussion that comes from the university students about the political questions. I'm afraid this is not being faced up to by our own leadership in the trade union movement and the Labour Party is also shirking this issue. They're not prepared to stand up and recognize these questions which are transforming the whole system which we live under. From what I've seen the majority of the students appreciate the social need for a whole tumultuous change in this whole stinking system.

# LOUGHBOROUGH STRIKE CONTINUES

Red Mole Reporter

The strike at Mansfield Hosiery Mills in Loughborough by Indian workers remains solid. The workers are fighting for a £5 a week rise and for the removal of the colour bar that prevents them from being employed as skilled knitters. The finding by the Race Relations Board that Mansfield Hosiery and the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers have contravened the Race Relations Act has cast a spotlight on the whole dirty business.

The management, since sacking the two hundred strikers, has remained tight lipped. Not that they need to say much as Prendergast, general president of the union, has acted as a very energetic spokesman for their case. Scarcely a day passes without his attacking the strikers. He issued a statement that all the demands of the strikers had been met. The strikers then asked him to put this "agreement" in writing. This was refused. It was normal to have union agreements verbal explained the injured Mr Prendergast who felt that his honour was being impugned. The strikers are only interested in a written and watertight agreement before they go back to work.

### UNION STRUCTURE

During the process of the strike the Indian workers have realised that it is essential to gain control of their union. At present there exists no branch structure but only a delegate factory committee. Not only has the factory committee no real powers, but whereas the majority of the workers are Indian, by a mysterious process the majority of the delegates represent the white skilled knitters. The mass meeting last Saturday spent a large portion of its time defending itself from the attacks of the full timers. Speakers argued that they paid the full timers who were their servants and in future if the union officials wanted to talk to them they would have to come to the Strike headquarters.

Attacks have been launched by the local press and by union officials on mysterious professional agitators. A Strike Committee member, at the Saturday mass meeting, replied that they would take help from wherever it was offered and that these "outsiders" had done more for the strikers than the officials who were employed to defend them. This was clear enough when the union national executive issued a statement the same day. An 8-point plan was produced. None of the points dealt with the rise, and there is one totally inadequate clause that calls for discussions on having Indians as skilled knitters after a return to work.

### CONFIDENT

The mood of the workers is confident, but they are in severe financial difficulties. The local Social Security is refusing to pay out money in spite of the intervention of the Nottingham Claimant's Union. Money is being collected in Nottingham and Leicester but donations should be rushed to:

**The Strike Committee,**
**31, Station Street,**
**Loughborough, Leics.**

# THE POLITICS OF THE PROVISIONALS

**In this article, which continues our series of analyses of Irish political organisations, Bob Purdie and Gery Lawless examine the Provisional Republican Movement. Since this article attempts to make a more rounded and developed analysis of the Provisionals than any we have yet published*, we would welcome a discussion on the issues raised.**

*Supporters of the Provisionals disrupt meeting of ph*

## PROGRAMME

The fundamental political definition of a movement, derives from its programme. Lenin defined the British Labour Party as bourgeois, despite its proletarian composition, because its programme, far from posing a transformation to socialism, was merely an alternative method of operating the capitalist system. In this *programmatic* sense the Provisionals, despite their adherence to the objective of a "democratic socialist republic", are bourgeois nationalists. Such a definition is *not* an epithet, but merely the starting point of a serious analysis. It absolutely does not mean that the Provisionals are reactionary, on the contrary Irish nationalism poses certain necessary and progressive advances which, while they correspond to the classical tasks of a bourgeois democratic revolution, are in the interests of the masses of the Irish workers and small farmers. The latter must fight for these objectives *whether or not the Irish bourgeoisie does* and against the bourgeoisie if it resists that struggle. Therefore the relationship between the Provisionals and Irish capitalism does not stem abstractly from their programme, but from the relationship of the Irish bourgeoisie to these political tasks.

The Irish bourgeoisie long ago surrendered the banner of nationalism, and is determined to retain its servile relationship with British imperialism. In so far as the Provisionals struggle for a bourgeois national programme they will be obliged not only to come into conflict with the bourgeoisie, but can only base themselves on the workers and small farmers. The important question is whether they can transcend that programme through conflict with the Irish bourgeoisie, and the pressure of the class interests of their social base.

It is this contradiction between the programme of the Provisionals and the process of Permanent Revolution in Ireland which gives them the impulse for a move to the left. But it is only the intervention of Marxists, explaining the necessity of a socialist strategy, in terms of the immediate problems which face the masses engaged in the national struggle, which can create a clear understanding of why the combined national and socialist revolutions in Ireland, can only be fought for with a different programme.

## "EIRE NUA"

To examine these programmatic questions more thoroughly, it is necessary to deal with some aspects of "Eire Nua", the social and economic programme of the Provisional Sinn Fein. "Eire Nua" combines three distinct political elements. The first of these is straight reforms within the existing capitalist framework; the second, vague and eclectic elements of traditional Irish liberal thought, given a radical twist by posing them as the outgrowth of popular struggles rather than as concessions from above. There is, however, little evidence that such policies as the establishment of co-operatives, credit unions etc. have ever been a major force within the Irish masses, and certainly have never mobilised any struggles which have challenged the State.

The third element is more important, since it does have roots in real struggle. This element is the radical concept of the relationship between the state and property as advanced by Padraig Pearse in *The Sovereign People*, the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916, and the Democratic Programme of the First Dail: the idea that property ought to belong to the people of the nation as a whole, and be distributed, according to their will, by a democratic state. In this traditional Republicanism came near to socialism. But such a demand is not in itself socialist. Socialism is a qualitatively new system of society, distinguished from capitalism by the political, social, economic and cultural tasks it accomplishes, and not merely by the way in which it is administered. It is entirely possible for this kind of demand to be achieved within capitalism. Indeed it was first put forward by that most radical of bourgeois democrats, Tom Paine, who influenced the French and American bourgeois revolutions. However it is impossible for such a demand to be achieved within latter-day Irish capitalism. So this element in the programme has great potential, but only because a fight for it would demonstrate the inadequacy of the programme as a whole, and the need for a socialist programme based on a Marxist analysis of the needs of the Irish workers and small farmers.

## REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Based on this programme the Provisionals have two main strategic objectives: to smash partition by destroying the Northern state, and forcing British imperialism to take its troops out of Ireland, and to transfer state power from the two partitionist assemblies to new regional parliaments based on community organisation of the people. This latter objective is rarely discussed but is however an extremely important aspect of the Provisionals' strategy since it is designed to solve such important problems as the relationship of the masses in the South to the struggle in the North and to break down resistance to Irish unity by the protestants. (It is argued that a regional parliament for the nine Counties of Ulster would have a protestant majority, and that such a radical degree of autonomy would, operating in favour of the protestants, win acceptance from them.)

In analysing this strategy (of regional parliaments) Marxists cannot simply state that it is utopian and non-socialist but must try to see the direction in which it takes the Provisionals. The proposal for Dail Uladh has a kernel of revolutionary potential. Although it was orginally posed as an institution created from the top, it was later drastically modified and was designed to base itself on the street committees and other organisations created in the North by the struggle against British imperialism. However despite the fact that its stated aims make a bow in the direction of the civil resistance movement, in practice Comhairle Uladh (the body set up to prepare for the creation of Dail Uladh) has settled down to a-political, a-historical, and a-class propaganda for regional government. The same is true of Comhairle Connacht, set up in the west of Ireland; the recently formed Comhairle Munhan, and Comhairle Laghain give no evidence of being different.

Concentrating their resources on abstract propaganda, these bodies have led the Provisionals into an alliance with right wing elements who, while they pose no tremendous danger, since they are politically impotent, help to separate out the two strands of the Provos' strategy and keep the second element abstract and a-political. An examination of the material produced by these bodies reveals a startling political naivety. *Take the Faroes for Example*, a pamphlet by Desmond Fennell (a right-wing Irish writer) argues that the Faroe Islands are prosperous because they have a healthy social structure, and a deep sense of regional loyalty. Fennell mentions, but gives no weight to the fact that the Faroes are a solitary example of a successful one-crop economy. The smoked fish industry provides a greater surplus than is normal for a primary producing country, and this combined with the relatively progressive policies of Denmark is the basis for the social structure and the re-birth of Faroese national culutre. The example of the Faroes is relevant only as an exception, and if for instance, the west of Ireland is to emulate them, it is precisely by forcing imperialism to concede a different relationship. Fennell does not pose such a struggle, which is conceivable only with a socialist programme.

## THE ECONOMIC BOMBING CAMPAIGN

The Provisional bombing campaign has been almost uniformly misunderstood or misrepresented. So-called "Marxists" have sternly denounced "terrorism" which they have defined in a quite un-Marxist way as a question of *military technique*, rather than as a question of the *political relationship between military action and the masses.*

The bombing campaign had two main purposes. Firstly, it was designed to seriously disrupt commercial life in the main cities. In turn this had two subsidiary purposes: to bring pressure to bear on the British government; and simultaneously to break up the foundations of the Six County state. It was secondly an important defensive measure: the British Army had to dispose of large forces in the centre of the cities, forces which could have been used in the period before Operation Motorman to saturate the Catholic ghettoes. The methods now being used in these areas are an indication of what this would have meant. Whole populations are constantly under surveillance by the Army, constantly threatened with arrest, and/or harassment. This seriously undermines their ability to engage in political resistance. Fortunately the Army has not yet been able to totally crush the people *but if they were able to dispose of large enough forces they would*. By obliging the Army to protect the city centres the Provisional IRA contributes directly to the possibility of mass political opposition. Thus the bombing campaign is not terrorist.

If we draw up a balance sheet, it shows a very heavy balance on the positive side. The campaign helped to maintain the free areas for much longer than they would otherwise have existed, by pinning down large numbers of troops. It forced the British Government into scrapping successive policies for victory in the North, and most important it smashed Stormont, which was the cement which held the Unionist monolith together. *The Red Mole* has constantly stressed that the fragmentation of Orangeism is a historic step forward in the struggle. It must be said, to the Provos' credit, that they understood very clearly that this would happen.

## SECTARIANISM AND THE BOMBINGS

But there is of course a negative side. The campaign has been accompanied by a high civilian casualty rate; there have been actions which have seemed sectarian (in the sense of being directed against the protestant population rather than the State, or forces of occupation). In particular Official Republicans would point to the elimination of such points of contact between protestant and catholic workers as the West Belfast Housing Alliance. And it has from time to time caused serious rifts within the catholic population itself.

Even accepting all of these at face value, they do not outweigh the tremendous positive results of the campaign. But when these points are examined more closely, some of them must be heavily qualified. It would be legitimate to say that the Provisionals should have learned from the experience of the Donegal Street bombing, that the Army and the RUC were liable to manoeuvre large numbers of civilian casualties, during a blitz on the scale of the so-called "Bloody Friday" bombings. On the other hand, one should not ignore the purely military factors which can frustrate the designs of such an operation. As we saw with the Aldershot bombing, bombs can go off prematurely; the use of inexperienced volunteers (due to internment) has caused more problems. Also it is not always possible to choose only the best targets, and often pure chance intervenes.

So far as the sectarian connotations are concerned, it must be clearly stated that the aim of the campaign was not sectarian. Because of the structure of employment in the Six Counties, an economic bombing campaign inevitably hits harder against protestant than catholic workers. It is a pity that the West Belfast Housing Alliance was broken up, but one must seriously question whether such organisations can create working class unity without the destruction of the main barriers between the workers, the institutions of the sectarian state. Those who argue that no action which increases sectarianism should be taken, will find themselves with a problem. Since any action which threatens the status quo of a sectarian state will polarise those who are for and against that state, it will result in an increase of sectarianism. The Civil Rights Movement is a classic example, its aims and activities were manifestly non-sectarian, but it led directly to the communal violence of August 1969. Does anyone seriously say that the Civil Rights campaign should not have been started?

There *have* been directly sectarian actions carried out by catholics against protestants. These must be deplored, and every effort made to eliminate them. But they are not directly the responsibility of the

*See *Ireland Unfree* by Bob Purdie, for a discussion of the history of Republicanism, including the split which produced the Officials and Provisionals. (IMG Publications 30p)

*Women Together' movement earlier this year*

Provisionals. Most have been carried out by catholic sectarians who are not under the discipline of either the Provisional or Official IRA. There can be little doubt however, that units or volunteers of the Provisionals, in particular, have broken discipline. Such indiscipline in the ranks of the IRA, or in the broader catholic population, stems from the political weakness of their leadership and a failure to resolutely campaign against the communalist culture which exists amongst sections (although by no means a majority) of the catholic population. Only a much clearer political strategy which spells out the way in which the struggle of the ghettoes in the North is integrated with an all-Ireland, and international struggle against capitalism and imperialism, could break down this cultural and political backwardness.

## THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BACKWARDNESS

This failure to break down the backwardness within the ghettoes has been the source of the rifts within the oppressed minority. The "peace" movement this year represented real forces within the ghettoes, influenced by the church, and the lack of a perspective for breaking out of the long-drawn-out struggle with the Army. If the incidents which led to the ending of the Provo cease-fire and the brutality of the British Army since Operation Motorman have buried these tendencies for the present, it does not mean that they no longer exist. On the contrary they are liable to break out again, in a more intractable form.

From this it can be seen how the inadequacy of the second strand of the Provisionals' strategy (the regional parliaments), contributes to the problems involved in carrying out the struggle in the North. However the weakness is not theirs alone, if there were a more capable alternative leadership they would have been superceded.

It must be stressed that the development of such a strategy is extremely difficult. It has to solve the problems created by the vast differences which exist in the political conditions North and South, in a situation where both states are in crisis. The crisis in the South is developing in a different way from that in the North, and the political problems involved in a co-ordinated struggle North and South are exceedingly complex due to the fact that some of the tasks of the national revolution have been achieved in a distorted and incomplete way in the South. The Provisionals must be criticised, not for failing so far to solve this contradiction, but because their programme and politics do not give them the capacity to find a solution.

## WHO WILL GO BEYOND THE PROVOS?

The Provisionals won their present position after the Catholic minority had gone through a whole series of different leaderships within an extremely short period. The ghettoe politicians of the Nationalist Party were pushed aside by those who were asking for civil rights. Then those who *fought* for civil rights came to the fore, followed by those who were determined to push the Civil Rights movement to the point of *challenging the Northern state*, and finally by those who were prepared to take the struggle beyond the stage of Civil Rights, to an armed national struggle against the British Army and in defence of the ghettoes. The Provisionals had the answers which corresponded to the needs of the minority after July 1970. If they are less politically sophisticated than some elements who were rejected the fact is that these other tendencies did not have the necessary answers to develop the struggle.

Given that this is the case, it is by no means pre-determined that the Provisionals will always exercise their present influence. Indeed it is the fact that they are unable to take the struggle beyond its present phase which has (in freezing the situation) been partly responsible for their continued role.

But will a breakthrough come about by developments within the Provisionals, or by their being overtaken by a new leadership? It is clear that without a new programmatic basis the Provisionals cannot achieve final victory, and it is unlikely that they can simply evolve such a programme through empirical experience. History shows that for a radical nationalist movement to become a socialist movement there must be a deep process of political struggle within it, which will be accompanied by re-groupments, rejection of layers of leadership, splits and re-unifications. Such a process, happening in Ireland, would create a new movement, quite different from the present Provisionals.

It is precisely the relationship between the Provisionals and revolutionary Marxists which is key for the way in which such a process will take place. This is why the reformist pseudo-Marxists, and the fake internationalists, who insist that the Irish revolutionary movement must follow their own dead-end road, play such a negative role. It is only those tendencies like the Peoples Democracy and the Revolutionary Marxist Group in Ireland who, while maintaining their political independence and a critical stance, nevertheless attempt to fight alongside the Provisionals in the current struggle and solidarise with their positive actions, who will be able to make a contribution.

Irish Republicanism has been the most consistent and radical strand of democratic nationalism It has a long history of struggle and has inspired great acts of revolutionary heroism. The Provisionals exemplify the positive aspects of that tradition, but also its limitations. It is those who are able to surpass and absorb that tradition, while giving a more adequate political leadership, who will supercede the Provisionals, not the majority of those who criticise them. And that new movement will draw heavily on the present Republican militants for its best cadres.

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## Why Europe welcomes

# THE MAN WHO KILLED A MILLION

At the present moment, the head of the Indonesian military government, Suharto, is visiting Europe. The aim of his trip is to get more 'aid' from the Western Countries which are members of the "Inter-governmental Group on Indonesia", the watch-dog of imperialist penetration in the Indonesian economy.

## MILITARY COUP

The present military regime seized power in 1965 and in the course of establishing its position slaughtered between 500,000 and 1 million people. In some areas the massacres reached almost unimaginable proportions. The U.S. magazine, *Time*, reported, "**The killings have been on such a scale that the disposal of the corpses has created a serious sanitation problem in East Java and Northern Sumatra where the humid air bears the reek of decaying flesh. Travellers from those areas tell of small rivers and streams that have been literally clogged with bodies. River transportation has at places been seriously impeded**" (17th December, 1966). The military leaders successfully used the hostility between Muslims and supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party (P.K.I.) to carry out Suharto's dictum: **"Better to kill 1,000 innocent people than to let one revolutionary escape."**

Since 1966, the government has continued to rely mostly upon physical suppression of all opposition, in order to maintain itself in power. Indonesia now has *at least* 100,000 political prisoners – the largest number of political prisoners in any country in the world. Since 1966, only 160 people have actually been tried in military courts. The remainder are detained without trial in prisons and concentration camps (the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva reported the existence of 350 such institutions, with 120,000-150,000 political prisoners). No definite charges need to be made against those arrested and imprisoned, and no evidence is required for internment.

The conditions for prisoners are horrific: since 1969, 10,000 have been transported to the malaria-infested island of Buru, a 'settlement' with grossly inadequate health facilities, constant food shortages and rigorous forced labour. Yet this is no isolated example; even the Djakarta paper, *Berita Yudha* reported (13th January 1971) that the detainees of the Glodok jail (Djakarta) received eight mouthfulls of rice spread with salt and a slice of salted fish as their daily ration.

## PIOUS HOPE

To this situation, the inevitable reply of capitalist governments and their media has been to point to the 'elections' of July 1971 as the usual 'proof' of the existence of a 'democratic' Indonesian society, but even this false index of 'democracy' remains a pious hope. The government's claims to be on 'the threshold of democracy' (Government publication) are utterly negated by the conditions under which these elections were held. The voting ban on past or present sympathisers of the P.K.I. automatically disenfranchised up to 15 million people; all candidates were screened by the "Institute for General Elections", which also banned 'radical or left wing' parties, intervened

*During the slaughter*

directly in the elections of opposition parties, and forcibly induced people to vote for the government-sponsored, military dominated Sekber-Golkar. Finally, one-third of the membership of the government assemblies was directly appointed by Suharto himself, one-third representatives of 'functional groups' set up and controlled by the military. Even then he and his cabinet are not constitutionally responsible to the Assembly. Clearly such 'elections' present no challenge to the government's control of the state apparatus.

There is, of course, nothing novel in the fact that capitalist governments should give considerable political, military and financial support to S.E.Asian military dictatorships. What is notable, however, is the speed with which they rushed to Suharto's assistance in early 1966 (the British government was one of the first to push aid into his hands). The general answer is hardly complex; as a world bank official stated after the 1965 coup, **'Indonesia is the best thing that's happened to Uncle Sam since the War".** With its rich raw material sector (petroleum, timber, bauxite, nickel, tin, manganese, silver, copper, uranium, etc.) and its extremely low cost labour force, Indonesia has become an imperialist eldorado – unlike the previous Sukarno regime which tried to place restrictions on imperialist penetration. One of Suharto's first acts was to restore foreign companies nationalised under Sukarno to their original owners. Hence, the flow of aid.

## FOREIGN INVESTMENT

The government, basing its strategy for planning on the utilisation of this aid and the returns from foreign investment (which are often pathetically low – 39% in the petroleum sector) bends over backwards to attract the latter. The Law on Foreign Capital Investment (January 1967) enables companies to invest in any sector of the economy (except defence), where profits are tax-free for periods of from 2-5 years, and then taxed at a very low rate for the next 5 years, following which they may be repatriated without further delay. A more specific example is the assistance given by the government to the Goodyear Tyre Co.; in addition to providing it with prison labour on its plantations in 1967, it obligingly placed severe restrictions on imported and home-produced tyres when asked to do so by the firm in 1968.

The financial bourgeoisie and those people directly tied to foreign capitalist concerns ( the comprador bourgeoisie, as they are called) make fortunes out of the government's economic policies. So do the landowners producing crops for export, and, of course, the military through widespread corruption. But the policies have done nothing to improve the terrible living conditions of the working class and the peasantry. The latter, unable to compete with the big plantations, are often heavily indebted to middlemen. Inreasingly they are forced to sell their labour-power to a large landowner or to migrate to the cities. But there unemployment remains high since government policy favours foreign investment which employs little labour. The 1969 Indonesian Development Plan was itself drafted by a group of economists trained by the U.S. government at M.I.T., Berkeley, Cornell, and then in Djakarta. As John Howard, director of Ford's International Training and Research Programme explained, **"Ford felt it was training the guys who would be leading the country when Sukarno got out".**

## TERRIBLE WARNING

The military control exercised by the government, with its vital support from numerous capitalist states, particularly the U.S.A., is capable of rapidly destroying any organised opposition, armed or unarmed. Opposition groups do exist, but they are generally small, isolated, and limited to specific reformist demands. All co-ordinated activity by student, intellectual and proletarian groups has been ruthlessly suppressed by the military. The P.K.I., before 1965, had an actual membership of over 2 million, and at least seven times as many potential supporters; utterly destroyed by the carnage of 1965-6, it is now split into two major factions. There is a group in the Soviet Union, supporting what may be broadly termed a 'parliamentary-road' strategy, and a group in Indonesia with contacts with exile groups in Peking, Tirana and Europe which, having carried out a self-criticism of its previous strategy, has attempted to analyse the Indonesian social formation, and specified the necessity of an armed struggle under a united front against the military government.

However, unless all the lessons of the Indonesian counter-revolution of 1965 are fully understood and digested the revolutionary movement in Indonesia and elsewhere will be unable to move forward. Nixon termed Suharto's rule as an "Adventure in Progress'. There are similar "adventures" taking place in Ceylon, India, Thailand, etc. That is why the Indonesian experience is a terrible warning to the entire revolutionary movement.

**J.T.**
**British Indonesia Committee**

*The British Indonesia Committee has as its objectives, to disseminate information, to provide aid to victims of the Indonesian government, and to oppose all political and economic support to that government. For further information, please write to The Secretary, 48 Macaulay Court, Macaulay Road, London S W.4.*

# REVIEW

## New Moscow Attack on Trotskyism

**AGAINST TROTSKYISM: A Collection of Documents (Progress Publishers, Moscow – £1.50p)**

When Stalin organised the assassination of Trotsky in August 1940 he believed he had reached the end of the road in the struggle against Trotskyism. With his contempt for theory, Stalin the "practical man" thought that the Fourth International would be buried with Trotsky's corpse in a Mexican grave.

But today, history is catching up with the Stalinist bureaucracy. The influence of revolutionary Marxism and the Fourth International is growing rapidly, especially among the youth, while the world Stalinist movement is increasingly split and entangled in ideological confusion. The days when Trotskyism could be answered with a bullet are over and the Kremlin bureaucrats are forced to attempt to attack the Trotskyist movement in print.

### PROBLEMS OF STALINISTS

This latest and most ambitious effort brings to the surface all the problems of the Stalinist bosses when they try to dabble in history. They begin, of course, by trying to use Lenin's polemics with Trotsky between 1903 and 1917 against the Fourth International. This section of the book might have been of value for students of the history of the Bolshevik party before 1917 if the quotations were not so selective.

The whole of the period when Trotsky was Commissar for War, at the head of the Red Army and leading the fight against the Whites and foreign intervention, is completely ignored, as is the voluminous correspondence between Lenin and Trotsky during that period. Similarly, Lenin's letters to Trotsky during the former's last illness, where he asks Trotsky to take up the struggle against Stalin and Dzherzinsky (March 5, 1923), find no mention in this book. (They are to be found in Volume 45 of Lenin's Collected Works, issued by the same publishers as the book under review.)

### RESOLUTIONS

Nearly half the book is devoted to resolutions against Trotsky and Trotskyism passed by various organisations in the Soviet Union (Party Conference, Trade Union branches, factory committees, etc) after December, 1923 – that is after Lenin's death and when the Stalinist bureaucracy had already established its stranglehold over every phase of Soviet life –, resolutions adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Communist International and various Comintern Plenums, etc. These also, of course, were by then packed with the Stalinist faithful. An interesting sidelight on this is given us by a South African delegate to the Sixth Congress (1928).

**"...A typed Copy of Trotsky's thesis on the situation in China was circulated among some delegates.....It was a damaging attack on Stalin's policy.....Of this Clements Dutt (brother of Palme Dutt and British delegate – GC) said to me in all seriousness. 'Trotsky's analysis is of course correct, but I'm sorry to say that Trotsky is no longer a communist'. The implication was clear: a communist must follow the line and failure to conform, even...on the soundest theoretical grounds, put one outside the fold...."** (*Rebel Pity* by Eddie & Win Roux, Penguin Books, 45p.)

### OMISSION

The most important omission in this compilation is the nineteen-thirties, the period of the great purges and the notorious Moscow Trials, during which Trotsky and his supporters were accused of the vilest imaginable crimes, including plotting, with Hitler, the overthrow of Stalin and the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. These trials were the logical conclusion of all the rigged up campaigns against Trotskyism which preceded them. At the present stage of the renewed struggle against Trotskyism, not even the neo-Stalinists can swallow that monstrous travesty of justice when a whole generation of Bolsheviks were literally wiped out.

In their foreword the editors do not hesitate to make use of all the distortions and falsifications of the earlier anti-Trotsky campaigns. Thus we learn that in 1905 **"Trotsky sought to counter Lenin's theory of the growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in to the socialist revolution with his own so-called theory of 'permanent revolution' which questioned the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and denied the revolutionary potentialities of the peasantry as an ally of the proletariat".**

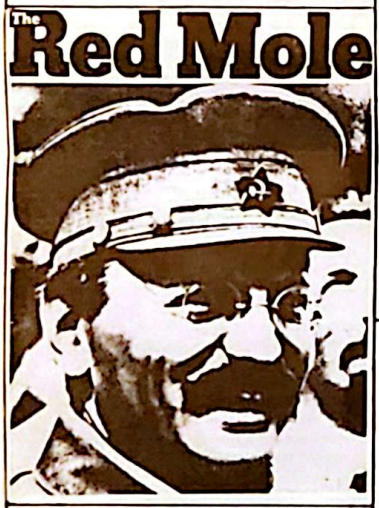
One has only to read Trotsky's writings of the period, now brilliantly reproduced in *Leon Trotsky 1905* (Allan Lane, £4.95) to know that this is standing the position on its head. It was precisely Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution* which declared war on the theory of revolution by stages to which both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks adhered in 1905, and pointed out that in our epoch, the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in backward countries, could only be carried out through a proletarian dictatorship, and that the dictatorship of the proletariat put the socialist tasks on the order of the day. He also stated that in this revolution, the allies of the proletariat would be the peasants but the hegemony would be in the hands of the proletariat. What the editors describe is not Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution but the stale Stalinist caricature of that theory.

Similarly we read that **"The Trotskyites lost all vestige of influence in the working class long before 1917"**. Strange, is it not, that this same Trotsky was voted on to the highest organs of the Bolshevik Party immediately after he joined forces with Lenin and that he was given the most responsible tasks by the Party after the seizure of power. Strange, is it not, that Lenin should have proposed this Trotsky, whom he is supposed to have distrusted all his life, as Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissaries, i.e. as Head of the new Government, at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party on October 26th (November 8th) 1917. It would be just as easy to deal with similar distortions in the Introduction.

The most enthusiastic buyers of this book will be those very Trotskyists it is attempting to defeat. For the book demonstrates more clearly than ever the total inability of the Stalinists to look history in the face.

George Cunvin.

## £10,000 FUND DRIVE FOR WEEKLY PAPER




**Donations continue to arrive. Last week we received £10 from a St Helen's shop steward who writes: "I've been reading *The Red Mole* now ever since the Pilkington strike. The paper's reporting of industrial struggles has improved a lot, but I still prefer your stuff on the struggles in Ireland and Vietnam, which I can't find in any other left-wing paper."**

**We are still a long way from £10,000, though, and would urge readers to help transform the trickle of money into a downpour. The total now stands at:**

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## The Ceylon Solidarity Campaign announces . . . .

**FUND-RAISING BENEFIT CONCERT**
To aid victims of political repression by the Bandaranaike regime.

**'CONCERT FOR CEYLON': Friday, 8th December, from 8.00 p.m. at the 'Mother Redcap' opposite Camden Town tube, N.W.1.**

Admission: ticket only–50p. *Performing will be artists from Ceylon, South Asian mainland, and well-known English folk artists Sandra Kerr and John Faulkner of 'Combine' theatre group.*

**Sponsored by the Ceylon Solidarity Campaign, 9 Dennington Park Mansions, London N.W.6.**

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**Available now:**–pamphlet *Ceylon: Island Behind Bars*, price 15p. Also, Bulletin no.4 of the C.S.C. will shortly be available, with news of recent developments in Ceylon.

**The Demands of the Ceylon Solidarity Campaign are:**

–immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners;

–an end to the State of Emergency now;

–removal of all powers under Special Regulations and repeal of repressive legislation including Criminal Justice Commissions Act;

–restoration of all political rights including the right of political organisation;

–restoration of all democratic rights including the right of free speech and assembly;

–restoration of all Trade Union rights including the right to strike and to engage in all other trade union activity;

–bringing to trial of army and police officers responsible for mass murders and other atrocities committed against the people;

–re-opening of the universities and schools now used as prison-camps and restoration of all students' rights.

### ASSOCIATION FOR RADICAL EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Meetings to be held at School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, W.C.1.

**Tuesday, 28 November**, 6 p.m. Conference Room, film on Laos–*People and their Guns*.

**Thursday, 30 November**, 6 p.m. General Refectory, 'South Korea under Martial Law'. Panel discussion. Speakers–Jon Halliday and Louis Wolf.

**Monday, 4 December**, 6.30 p.m., Conference Room, 'Repression in the Philippines'. Speakers include Louis Wolf.

### CLASS STRUGGLE AND REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES IN AUSTRALIA

Meeting with John McCarthy, Editor of *Militant* and leading member of the Communist League in Australia.

**Friday, 1 December, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (near Holborn tube), 7.30 p.m.**

**Details:** Jo Andrews, 01-837 9987.

**CHINA:** The 'Political Theory of Mao Tse-tung'. Speaker: Sam Mauger, Chairman: Hung-Ying Bryan. Wed. 29th Nov. at 7.15. Holborn Central Library Hall, Theobalds Road, WC1. Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, 24 Warren Street, London W1. 01-387 0074.

## The SLL and Ceylon

*The following statement was issued October 29th by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.*

The October 21, 1972, issue of the *Workers Press*, the official organ of the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League, carried a slanderous attack on Bala Tampoe, the general secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union. The author of the article, one Jack Gale, asserts that Tampoe is **"known to have associated with the CIA".**

Why should the imperialist spy agency want to associate with Bala Tampoe? Washington is certainly not preparing to overthrow the Bandaranaike regime - at least from the left. Gale offers no explanation. Nor does he explain what interest Bala Tampoe, who opposes both imperialism and the Bandaranaike regime, could conceivably have in associating with the CIA.

The author of the article indicates as his source of information only Edmund Samarakkody, a former factional opponent of Tampoe. An investigation undertaken by us in 1969 showed that the slander was cooked up and put into circulation originally by the former Trotskyists in Ceylon who betrayed the movement and accepted posts offered them by Bandaranaike, and who were under heavy fire for this from Bala Tampoe.

How did this bit of ancient garbage happen to finally end up gracing the pages of the *Workers Press*, which makes a great show of its repugnance for the former Trotskyists in Ceylon and all their works?

First of all because the technique of the "big lie" has been utilised with increasing frequency in recent years by the leaders of the SLL under the guidance of their general secretary, Gerry Healy, and this item looked particularly suitable for such use.

The smearing of Bala Tampoe, a leading Ceylonese Trotskyist, in this way is on par with the beating that stewards of the SLL inflicted on Ernest Tate, a leading British Trotskyist, while Healy looked on. Tate was "guilty" of hawking Trotskyist literature in front of an SLL public meeting. Tampoe scorned inducements to line up with the SLL.

These are signs, among others, of the deep degeneration of the SLL. Incapable of meeting criticism with reasoned arguments, the leaders of the SLL borrow from the arsenal of Stalinism –which also calls for labeling political opponents as "spies" and "agents" of foreign powers and subjecting them to physical assault.

The timing of the attack on Bala Tampoe is worth noting. Tampoe is one of the main attorneys for the defence of the young revolutionists of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, who are now being processed in the courts by the repressive Bandaranaike regime. Coinciding with this defence, various unions (among them the Ceylon Mercantile Union) initiated the first big action by the toiling masses of Sri Lanka since the "state of emergency" was decreed by Bandaranaike a year ago. This action was a nation-wide, twenty-four-hour hunger strike. And the bank workers, in defence of their wage standards, called a strike in defiance of the coalition government composed of the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom party, the reformist Lanka Sama Samaja party, and the pro-Moscow Communist Party.

All the reactionary supporters of the treacherous coalition regime rallied in support of its efforts to railroad the JVP revolutionists to long terms in prison, to smash the bank workers' strike, and to keep the masses cowed.

This was when the Healyites found it necessary to make their contribution. They did not solidarise with the Trotskyist led bank workers' strike. They did not solidarise with the legal defence of the young revolutionists of the JVP against the frame-up charges of the coalition regime. They did not solidarise with the hunger strike taken as a step towards arousing mass resistance to the abrogation of democratic rights in Sri Lanka.

Instead, the Healyites singled out the "main enemy" for their bucket of mud.

What does Healy hope to gain from this? Something of great importance to him. In view of the latest developments in Sri Lanka, curiosity in the ranks of the SLL over his real reasons for splitting from the world Trotskyist movement might become troublesome. A fast prophylactic was required. Hence the poisonous article against Bala Tampoe and the Fourth International.

*Brandt: expected to crack down on working class*

# WHO GAINS FROM BRANDT VICTORY?

By OLIVER MacDONALD

The two main rivals in the West German elections were Willi Brandt's Socialist Party (the SPD) and Barzel's Christian Democrats (the CDU). Brandt's victory has been widely welcomed in very mixed quarters. Both Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath appear to be delighted and so does the Morning Star. Mr. Brezhnev and his East European friends have applauded the result, and yet the Common Market Commission also appears pleased. The only important international power to stand out firmly against the chorus of approval has been the Chinese leadership. These reactions give an insight into some of the main features of politics today.

All the figures clapping Brandt hope to gain something from the result. Heath reckons that in the fights that will take place within the Common Market, Brandt will stand up to the French more firmly than the CDU would have managed to do. Wilson feels that if the British bourgeoisie can see a 'responsible' social-democratic party ruling Germany, they will be more friendly towards his party here. The Russian and other East European leaders have been attempting to regularise their relations with the West for some time, and they reckon that Brandt will be more co-operative than the Christian Democrats. And the British Communist Party figures that anything which helps to unite Social Democrats and Stalinists in the East will help their efforts to fuse with the Labour Party 'Lefts' in this country. As for Mao-tse Tung's opposition to Brandt, it is simply the exception which proves the rule: anything which seems to benefit the Russian leadership is immediately opposed by the Chinese leaders. Brandt, according to Chinese diplomatic sources, is "**too inclined to talk peace with the Soviet Union**". Therefore Peking has decided to back the reactionary cold warrior Barzel.

The attitude of communists towards Brandt's eastern policy has nothing in common with the Chinese leadership's sectarianism – their continual refusal to place the general interests of the workers' movement before their own narrow immediate gain. Brandt's policy will favour German capital because it will help to open up the East European economies which the German bourgeoisie can reach more easily than their Western rivals. Nevertheless, in so far as the detente in Europe proceeds it will benefit the working class movement in one important respect. The ability of the capitalist classes of Western Europe to play the card of a 'threat from aggressive Communist powers in the East' will be greatly weakened. The whole set of Cold War ideas with which it was possible to divide the workers' movement will crumble. And the massive machinery of violence set up on the pretext of 'defence', but now being held in reserve against the rise of the working class movement , is open to political attack from the left.

Similarly, in the East, open collaboration between the bureaucratic leaderships of the workers' states and the imperialist powers helps to undermine the credibility of the Stalinist tactics against the East European working class. Their warnings of a counter-revolutionary threat from the West , which they have used for twenty years as a bogus pretext for suppressing workers' democracy, will sound increasingly hollow. It will become increasingly clear that the forces which are really opening Eastern Europe to capitalist influence, particularly in the economic field, are not the working class oppositional currents, but the bureaucratic leaderships themselves.

## GERMAN CLASS STRUGGLE

The consequences of the election result for the domestic class struggle in Germany are more difficult to assess. Like the Labour Party, the German Socialist Party brings out some rhetoric about 'democratic socialism' at election time: 'socialism' to get the workers' votes; 'democracy' to re-assure the bourgeoisie. After the defection of the SPD's darling of the middle classes, economics minister Karl Schiller it was necessary to pull out even more working class votes so the 'socialist' rhetoric was even stronger.

But, also like in Britain, very few German working class militants believed for one moment that Willi Brandt was going to expropriate the bourgeoisie and introduce socialist measures. They voted for Brandt because they saw the SPD as being in some sense their party, or at least out of conviction that nothing would be gained by the workers from the Christian Democratic government.

As for the bourgeoisie, its main concern has been the relative failure of the Brandt government to carry through the incomes policy tactic against the working class. As with the Labour government here in 1964 the German social democrats were put into office by the capitalists to win the trade union leadership to a policy of wage restraint. The anti-union record of the CDU made it unsuitable for that task. But the wave of wildcat strikes in 1969 made the trade union bosses draw back from wage restraint for fear of losing support among the rank and file. The result was some very hard fought wage strikes, like the official metalworkers' strike at the end of 1971. The decisive test for Brandt in the eyes of the bourgeoisie will be his readiness to crack down on working class militants in the coming months.

Barzel and the CDU had isolated themselves in the Spring of this year by trying to topple the Brandt government on the issue of its Eastern policy – something that was widely supported in all classes of German society. As a result, the capitalist press concentrated on trying to build up support for the Socialist Party's junior partner in government, the small bourgeois grouping called the Free Democratic Party. This tactic worked and the Free Democrats emerged from the elections with a controlling vote in the Bundestag, the West German Parliament. In the coming months we will see the Free Democrats acting as the watch-dogs of the bourgeoisie within the coalition, ensuring that Brandt is kept firmly on course for an attack on the working class.

# RETURN OF PERON

Peron has returned to Argentina: but the conditions of his former rule cannot return. His arrival is surrounded by ambiguities and uncertainties, but if his would-be triumphal procession into Buenos Aires has been less than comfortable, this is not so much because his legs are stiffer than they were twenty years ago; rather the two horses this Bonaparte would ride are travelling in opposite directions.

*Demonstration in Buenos Aires greets Peron on his return*

## REAL GAINS

Peron and his fellow officers came into power in 1945 at the height of the wartime and postwar boom. Trading with all the belligerents in the Second World War, which broke the domination of British imperialism over its rivals, Argentina experienced a boom which contrasted sharply with the extreme depression of the 1930s. In the 1930s reactionary governments had launched vicious attacks on such democratic rights as the working class had won in its previous struggles, and the capitalist class survived these years by a real impoverishment of the masses. Now, for a brief period, the working class was in a position to wrest some gains from the employers. Not only that, but to further the project of 'national' industrial development and gain support for it against the landowners and imperialist powers, Peron turned to the working class, and presented himself, along with his wife Eva, as the champion of labour and of the 'descamisados' (shirtless ones). Union membership doubled and trebled, in the old-established industries like meat-packing and sugar-producing, as well as in the new industrial sectors.

Peron aimed to establish control – state control – of the union apparatus (the UGT – General Confederation of Labour); but in these conditions, with the greatest development of union organisation in Argentinian history, real gains were being made by the working class, so that despite the government's practices of 'intervention', they could not always contain the struggles of the trade unionists.

By 1955, the foreign exchange reserves on which the post war industrial growth had been based, had dried up, and imperialism was increasingly impatient with the restrictions on foreign capital. After the fall of Peron, foreign capital rushed into the country, and into conflict with the Argentinian working class. Since then, for the mass of the Argentinian working class, the rule of Peron has appeared as a golden age, and Peronism has been the dominant ideology of the labour movement. Because of the real gains made by the working class in the years between 1945 and 1955, this ideology cannot be characterised as fascist or wholly reactionary – as the Stalinists would have it. (For the CP, Peronism was fascist from the start, because of its opposition to British imperialism, the wartime ally of the Soviet Union.) But the Peronist bureaucracy has taken a heavy toll of the Argentinian working class. It has been split and divided, especially since it has been banned and threatened by military repression (the army has governed since 1966), but while its right wing has engaged in blatant class collaboration, the 'lefts' have thrown their members into adventures, without preparing them to defend their actions against the armed strength of the state.

## CIVIL WAR

Since the 'Cordobazo' of 1969, when the military smashed through the barricades erected by the workers and youth of Cordoba, Argentina has been in a state of incipient civil war. A class-struggle wing of the unions has begun to develop, most notably in SITRAC-SITRAM, the union of the workers in the Fiat factories of Cordoba. Last year this union held a conference for revolutionary trade unionists, where the need for armed struggle against the dictatorship was overwhelmingly accepted, and support voiced for those groups engaged in it (the revolutionary left Peronists, Montoneros, FAR, FAP, and the ERP, led by the Argentinian section of the Fourth International, the PRT).

The mass of the Argentinian working class, however, still accepts Peronist leadership: and the ruling class is now consciously attempting to exploit these illusions to avert a civil war in which they could not hope for any quick victory. General Lanusse, President since 1971, has been unable to leave Peronism out of account in his project for restoring 'stability' and holding elections in March next year. The 'Gran Acuerdo Nacional', his electoral bloc of bourgeois parties, excluded the Peronists, and so was destined to renew violent conflict with the labour movement. Lanusse was therefore obliged to let Peron return, in the hope, grounded in long talks with the former dictator's representatives, of being able to form some kind of electoral bloc with him, or more likely his appointed successor.

Throughout the pre-election period, Peron has been wooing the military and discouraging or denouncing the 'extremists' in his own camp. But the divisions in his own camp cannot be avoided. In the conditions of Argentina today, where the capitalist class can no longer make big concessions to the workers, Peron can only regain power, whether through elections or a coup , in alliance with sections of the military which would very soon move against the working class again. Like the regime of Velasco Alvarado in Peru, such a government would rapidly and brutally have to show its class nature.

## ISSUE

What is at issue is whether the working class breaks from Peronism by developing its struggles against the regime independently, or suffers important defeats, at the hands of the Peronist leadership itself. The way forward for the Argentinian working class lies in struggle against any move by the trade union bureaucracy to engage in or support any electoral pact with the bourgeois parties and the military; and in the arming of the struggles of the workers themselves and the building of institutions of dual power.

JW

**INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP**

( British Section of the Fourth International)
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# Stoke Newington Eight: from defence to attack

By BOB WILLIAMS

An historic political trial is entering its final stages. At the time of writing, the judge is starting his summing up at the end of the 5 and a half month trial of the Stoke Newington 8. These 8 comrades are accused of being members of the Angry Brigade and of therefore being involved in a conspiracy to engage in bomb attacks. They are pleading not guilty and have fought the bourgeois system of class justice every inch of the way.

Before the trial the mass media had a field day with scare stories against the Angry Brigade, creating an atmosphere in which the 8 defendants appeared guilty before the trial even began. But for some months the mass media have been silent. Why? According to the Press Association, there was "no interesting copy in the case". Is it not interesting to know the far-reaching accusations which the defendants have so far levelled against the police, the judicial system, the whole system of capitalist exploitation in which we live? Is it not unusual, indeed sensational, when the defendants in a court can transform themselves into the prosecution and challenge the impartiality of the whole system of 'law and order'? Is this really too dull for the Press Association, or is it perhaps too near the knuckle?

But, if the dailies have been silent, one juicy little anti-Communist rag has been more than making up for this. *The Red Mole* would like to draw the attention of the Court (we are told this is how to put it) to an expensively produced little journal called *East-West Digest*, produced by the Conservative MP, Geoffrey Stewart-Smith, which speaks, in its November issue, of "those members of the Angry Brigade at present on trial". We are not legal experts, and we know that Mr Geoffrey Stewart-Smith is as staunch a defender of the 'rule of law' as the head of Scotland Yard's Bomb Squad himself. But is this statement not the most monstrous contempt of court? The most blatant breach of the law? We will be interested to see whether the 'impartial' hand of the law metes out justice to this Conservative MP.

In the meantime the 8 defendants are threatened with savage sentences. One of the ways in which the left capitulates to bourgeois justice is by seeing the trial as though it were something quite outside the class struggle, something that cannot be affected by the action of socialists. In fact the main axis of the prosecution lawyers is now to try to persuade the jury that the Stoke Newington 8 are isolated nut-cases, over whose fate nobody need lose a night's sleep. So why not put them away and get back to work as quickly as possible? It is vitally important that from Monday, November 27th until the end of the trial all possible forces are brought onto the picket line outside the Old Bailey and outside the courts in provincial cities to demonstrate that the Stoke Newington 8 are not isolated and that the jury cannot believe that if they are found guilty they will be forgotten.

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# WORKERS BACK STUDENTS AT STIRLING

Red Mole Reporter

A few weeks ago, the Queen's visit to Stirling University was intdrrupted by a demonstration organised by the student's union. The university authorities decided to respond by victimising 24 students, and thereby opened up a battle that has extended right across Scotland. On Monday, when the students appeared before a disciplinary board, a demonstration of some 4,000 people – twice the number of students at the university itself, marched through Stirling in solidarity with the students.

The marchers were in a very militant mood, shouting 'Cottrell Out!' (the name of the University vice-Chancellor), 'Thatcher Out!' 'Revolution in!', 'No Victimisation!' and 'No Kangaroo Court! As the demonstration passed a building site, construction workers put up a solidarity banner. Speeches were made by representatives of the Scottish Miners' Union, the Scottish TUC, Stirling Trades Council, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, the Stirling Labour Party, a sociology lecturer from the university and Digby Jacks, President of the National Union of Students

Prior to the demonstration, the ASTMS trades council delegate was sacked from his job at the university. A couple of weeks before, the Trades Council had issued a press statement in support of the students.

At the time of writing it would appear that most of the charges against the 24 are going to be dropped – the storm of revolt has made the university authorities retreat, at least temporarily.

The quick transformation of the struggle at Stirling university into a mobilisation of the labour movement against the attack on students shows very clearly the rapid development of the class struggle at the present time. It is precisely through such magnificent actions as these that the working class can begin to take the leadership of society out of the hands of a capitalist class so enfeebled that it cannot take a protest against the Queen in its stride.

Solidarity action is continuing and must be spread to ensure that victimisation does not continue in other forms.

# FREEZE (From page 1)

institutions creates the image of its workforce as some kind of volunteers who are thus particularly susceptible to moral blackmail. When they contemplate militant action in pursuit of their own interests they are invariably accused by the management by cynically endangering the lives of the patients. But it is the management's cynical exploitation of the workers' dedication to the patient which allows them to get away with running a service so inadequate that it frequently endangers life.

## HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

Militancy is also inhibited by the extremely hierarchical structure of hospital staff. This perpetuates the barriers to class unity by turning their energies into preserving the marginal privileges of their status, and by demoralising those at the bottom of the ladder into a belief that they are only paid what they are worth. The doctors at the top derive an inflated self-importance which, combined with the mystique attaching to the role of the doctor, has ensured that they have no hesitation in looking after their own special interests. Such a hierarchy reinforces the hand of the bureaucracies of the unions, where they exist.

The appalling situation of many hospital workers can be expected to deteriorate if they do not organise in a new way. The Government's plans for the N.H.S. are designed to deal with the ruling class's crisis of profitability in a more drastic way than ever before. The main theme is cost-effectiveness/cost-minimisation under "scientific" management to be introduced in a sweeping reorganisation of the N.H.S. worked out by business consultants McKinsey & Co.

## LOW PRIORITY

To put an end to the chronic bad pay and conditions and to meet these current and future attacks hospital workers must realise that the source of their problems is the low priority which capitalism places on the health service and its workers. Thus their enemy is not just the management but the Government and the social system it defends. The imposition of the freeze should make that clear.

A prerequisite for fighting the Government and the freeze is to organise independently of the bureaucracies. Union chiefs said they could not justify the £8 claim demanded by many branches, some of whose members take home less than £14, and while asking for a miserable £4 they were trying to negotiate a voluntary freeze with the government. Now, instead of threatening to bring their members out on strike if the claim is not conceded, they are asking to be treated as a special case. This sort of talk, suggesting that it's O.K. to hit other groups of workers provided you don't touch us, just helps to divide the working class. What the union chiefs should be doing is explaining to other trade unionists that the hospital workers should be supported by other sections of the labour movement precisely because they are in the front line of the fight of *every worker*, the fight against the pay freeze.

# Interview with LASH Secretary

**– How was the London Alliance of Stewards of Health Workers (L.A.S.H.) formed?**

The idea came from our branch here in St. Georges during a TUC educational course we were attending. But it was the Bristol hospital workers strike which stimulated wide support for LASH, throughout the London hospitals. At first the hospital authorities appeared friendly, allowing us to meet in hospital premises, etc. But their attitude quickly changed when they saw that we were serious about organising the fight for better conditions.

**– What is the relationship between LASH and the Unions?**

Union leaders are doing as little as possible. A week ago, the London Division of the National Union of Public Employees (the largest union in the industry) met. To combat LASH, Alan Fisher, the General Secretary, came along. He tried to argue that we had to go through every negotiating channel before taking any action. The mood of the meeting was very militant. Fisher was continually heckled and our motion for an emergency conference of Stewards and Branch Secretaries to discuss the dispute was carried unanimously. One indication of the intentions of the NUPE leadership will be whether the conference is fixed to take place before or after the end of the 90 day freeze.

**– What are the problems facing hospital workers in taking industrial action?**

It is not possible for us to organise a work to rule. Ancillary workers have such miserably low pay, that they would not at present accept a work to rule which simply cuts their pay packets. In strike action so far we have always arranged for essential services to be maintained by union members – they do the work without drawing pay (something which the capitalist press never mentions). But what must be remembered is that what sabotages the curing of the great bulk of patients – those who are not on the emergency list – is not a few days of strikes, but the two year wait while the consultants give first place to the rich patients who pay for private attention. It is this private practice and the state's refusal to finance the health service adequately, not the low paid ancillary workers who are the enemies of a decent medical service.

When the ancillary workers at Kings' College and Queen Mary's Roehampton, went on twenty-four hour token strikes, they faced the attempt to use "volunteer" labour, brought in to break the strike. The strikers replied by withdrawing all workers dealing with essential services and by declaring that they would simply extend the strike until it had carried on a full twenty-four hours without blackleg labour. This will be our policy in the future.

Of course one of our biggest problems will be to get our case across as widely as possible to counter the vicious attacks that will come against hospital workers. During the stoppage at Kings' College hospital, kids from Westminster public school were brought in to break the strike and our pickets had to seek police protection against the strike breakers. One of the main kinds of help which socialists can provide for the hospital workers when they go into struggle will be to help publicise our case as widely as possible. The first people we must reach with our publicity must be the patients themselves and their visitors.

**– What are LASH's plans for future action?**

We have called a national conference of union members not only from the hospitals, but from other sections of the working class. This will be held on December 2nd/3rd at the Fountain Pub, Praed Street, Paddington. At that conference we will propose all out strike action against the pay freeze. The start and duration of the action will be decided at the conference. At our previous conference we had growing support from out of London and we hope for an even better turn out in December.

**–What kind of solidarity action are you hoping for from other sections of workers?**

In fact, we are not calling for *solidarity*; we are fighting the *freeze*, that is what our struggle is about and therefore we are asking other workers not to solidarise with the struggle but to *join* it. If we bring down the freeze we will in fact bring down the Tory government whose whole future depends on the success of the freeze. This is a full, frontal assault on the working class. The union leaders are in fact selling out the people who employ them. So workers must rely on their own strength and organise to smash the freeze.

LASH can be contacted through: Mark Palmer, LASH Secretary, 122 Sinclair Road, London W 14 OML

# Blacks Occupy - Defy 'Revolutionary'

Red Mole Reporter

Black militants in Chapeltown, Leeds' largest black ghetto, have decided to occupy the Studley Grange children's centre on Friday, 24 November. The centre was initially organised in 1965 by a group of West Indian parents but was rapidly taken over by the liberal white establishment, who preserved a token black representation consisting of two Uncle Toms.

The centre gathered support and its income today stands at £7,000 per annum, most of it from government and trust funds. However the whites in charge have refused to allow the black community of Chapeltown to exercise any control over the centre. Hence the occupation.

Black militants appealed for support at a public meeting last Wednesday night organised jointly by Leeds IMG and the Afro-West Indian Brotherhood, the largest black militant organisation in Leeds. The IMG comrades pledged support for the action.

## IRONY

The irony in the situation is that the white man who has been warden of the centre for the last two years is a Mr Joff Browning, a leading member of the Leeds SLL. Despite repeated requests from blacks he has refused to resign his post.

Browning's attitude is an absolute disgrace and shows the ultimate logic of the reactionary line of the SLL on the black question. His attitude is even more surprising in view of the fact that a prominent leader of the SLL, Cliff Slaughter, is resident in Leeds. The SLL should disown Browning publicly – any other course would only further discredit the revolutionary movement in the eyes of the local black community. We will publish details of the occupation in our next issue.

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